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THE ROUND PEN

Official Newsletter of BondFire Ranch

A Ranch In Motion

Spring at BondFire Ranch was filled with milestones, meaningful partnerships, and moments that reminded us why this mission continues to grow. From welcoming new Veterans into the arena to launching our first-ever Ruck & Ride, from strengthening statewide partnerships to celebrating four incredible years of serving those who have served, every week brought new opportunities to build connection, hope, and community.

This issue highlights a season defined by growth and accomplishments—not only across the Ranch, but within the lives of the military members, Veterans, first responders, families, volunteers, and community partners who continue to make BondFire Ranch a place where healing and belonging flourish.

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One Hoof Print At A Time

Spring began with momentum and purpose as BondFire Ranch welcomed new participants, strengthened partnerships, and prepared for one of the most exciting seasons in our history.

The quarter opened with trail work, facility improvements, and the completion of our new pole barn drainage system as volunteers worked tirelessly to prepare the Ranch for our inaugural Ruck & Ride event. Behind every improvement was a shared belief that every project today creates greater opportunities for tomorrow.

One of the season's highlights came as we welcomed our first all-female Veteran Cowgirl Boot Camp, bringing together women Veterans from across Alabama for a day of horses, fellowship, learning, and encouragement. Watching new friendships form and confidence grow reminded us once again that healing often begins with simply feeling understood.

Throughout April, Heroes in the Saddle participants continued building trust and confidence through weekly lessons while our Thursday evening Bible Study remained a place of fellowship, reflection, and encouragement.

Where Purpose Meets People

As spring unfolded, the Ranch became a gathering place.

Our first annual Ruck & Ride became more than an event. It became a celebration of partnership as BondFire Ranch joined with Operation Iron Ruck, Sherer Farms, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, and numerous volunteers to create a day centered on connection and service.

The Ranch also celebrated an important milestone—its fourth anniversary. Looking back over four years of growth reminded us that every program, every lesson, every volunteer hour, and every partnership has been built one relationship at a time.

Participants continued progressing through Heroes in the Saddle while Cowgirl Boot Camp returned for Day Two, welcoming women Veterans back to deepen both their horsemanship skills and the friendships formed during their first session.

Boots, Hooves, and Heartwork

Behind every successful program is a tremendous amount of work that often happens quietly behind the scenes.

This quarter brought annual veterinary exams, farrier visits, pasture maintenance, pond improvements, trail preparation, and construction projects designed to prepare BondFire Ranch for future growth. From stocking the pond with additional bluegill to building the new pond-side outhouse and planning a future Longleaf Pine restoration project, every improvement reflected our commitment to creating spaces where people can reconnect with nature and with one another.

New participants joined Heroes in the Saddle while returning riders celebrated important milestones, demonstrating growth in confidence, communication, and horsemanship.

As June recognized PTSD Awareness Month, we were reminded that healing often doesn't happen through grand gestures. Sometimes it begins with brushing a horse, casting a fishing line, walking a trail, or simply knowing someone is willing to walk beside you.

When Missions Align

One of the defining themes of this quarter was collaboration.

Throughout April, May, and June, BondFire Ranch continued expanding relationships with organizations across Alabama dedicated to serving military members, Veterans, first responders, and their families.

Conversations with Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project, Operation Iron Ruck Foundation, Alabama Veteran, HAWK Equine Assisted Learning, Warrior Legacy Ranch, Berryhill Farm, Vets Recover, the University of Alabama, Jacksonville State University's Victory Center, and the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs strengthened an ever-growing network of organizations committed to improving the lives of those who have served.

Our Founder also had opportunities to share the BondFire Ranch story with community leaders, nonprofit partners, and organizations across the state while laying the groundwork for future Cowboy Boot Camps, additional Ruck & Ride events, expanded outdoor programming, and collaborative initiatives through the HORSE Alliance.

Every new partnership reminds us that the greatest impact is made when organizations work together rather than alone.

Where Faith Meets Stillness

Some of the most meaningful moments this spring happened away from the spotlight.

Thursday evenings continued to bring our BondFire family together through Healing Through the Word of God Bible Study, creating a welcoming place where participants could share life, encourage one another, and strengthen friendships.

Guests spent quiet afternoons fishing by the pond, children met horses for the first time, Veterans gathered around shared meals, and volunteers discovered that some of life's best conversations happen while grooming horses, repairing fences, or watching the sun set across the pasture.

During PTSD Awareness Month, these simple moments carried even greater significance. They reminded us that healing is rarely rushed. It grows through trust, consistency, faith, and community.

The Ranch continues to be a place where people can slow down, breathe deeply, and remember they never have to walk life's journey alone.

The Sacred in the Simple

Spring was filled with ordinary moments that became extraordinary because they were shared. Volunteers spent Saturdays mowing pastures, trimming trails, caring for the herd, and preparing the Ranch for future programs. Families gathered around the horses. Friends introduced friends to BondFire Ranch. Community leaders stopped by to learn more about our mission.

This season also included drone flights capturing the beauty of the Ranch for our Kubota Hometown Proud Grant application, continued planning for future camping opportunities, additional fishing access, and expanded outdoor experiences that will benefit those we serve for years to come.

As BondFire Ranch entered its fourth year of service, we were reminded that every fence repaired, every lesson taught, and every partnership formed contributes to something much larger than ourselves.

Three Months, Countless Moments

Over the past three months, BondFire Ranch continued growing in ways both visible and unseen. New friendships were formed. Veterans discovered confidence through horses. Families found time to reconnect. Volunteers gave generously of their time, talents, and hearts.

By the Numbers – April to June 2026

- First Annual Ruck & Ride successfully launched.
- First All-Female Veteran Cowgirl Boot Camp completed.
- BondFire Ranch celebrated 4 Years of Service.
- Multiple new Veterans welcomed into Heroes in the Saddle.
- Returning participants reached milestone riding lessons, including 9th and 10th lesson achievements.
- Seven horses received annual veterinary examinations, vaccinations, and Coggins testing with clean bills of health.
- Quarterly Ranch Clean-Up brought volunteers together to improve trails and facilities.
- Expanded partnerships with Veteran-serving organizations across Alabama.
- Continued weekly riding lessons, Bible Studies, family visits, fishing outings, and community events.

Beyond the Numbers

- This quarter wasn't defined by statistics alone...
- It was defined by courage shown by new participants stepping into the arena for the first time.
- It was defined by volunteers giving up weekends to improve the Ranch.
- It was defined by horses quietly teaching lessons that words often cannot.
- And it was defined by a growing community that continues to believe every military member, Veteran, first responder, and family deserves a place where they are welcomed, valued, and never have to face life's challenges alone.

One conversation. One lesson. One volunteer. One hoof print at a time.

NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENTS

BONDFIRE RANCH

JULY

EVENTS

- CENTRAL ALABAMA MARINE COUNCIL SUMMER LEARNING CAMP, JULY 21-21.
- RANCH CLEAN-UP DAY JULY 18

AT BONDFIRE RANCH

AUGUST

EVENTS

- BIRMINGHAM VET CENTER COWBOY BOOT CAMP AT BFR, AUGUST 28
- OPERATION IRON RUCK DAY ZERO ON AUGUST 16

SEPTEMBER

EVENTS

- BIRMINGHAM VET CENTER COWBOY BOOT CAMP AT BFR, SEPTEMBER 25